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Empirical Study of Career Management and Engagement

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Abstract

This paper constructs the theoretical model of relation between organizational career management, individual career management and engagement. The results show that: Promotion fair, pay attention to training and vocational cognition of organizational career management positively affect individual career management, which also positively affect engagement, but they do not have direct significant impact on engagement. Provide information of organizational career management not only affect individual career management positively and directly, but also positively affect the engagement with the mediation of individual career management.

Key words: Career management; Organization; Individual; Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Along with the advancement of market economy in China, Chinese enterprises were faced with unrest living environment, fierce competition environment and employment environment. The employees became more uneasy, their careers became more unpredictable. Since the 1990s, the objective conditions were that many enterprises are facing engagement decline. According to the survey of global work engagement from the Gallup,

China was among the countries of world's lowest level of engagement. How to improve engagement of employees is an urgent problem to many managers of enterprises.

During the 21st century, with the enterprise restructuring, layoffs, budget control and increasingly flat management channel, staff's unease enhanced obviously, career also becomes more unpredictable. In this case, a lot of people think that the subject of the career management should be from the organization to the individual. Even some managers think organization career management is not necessary. But it really the case?

The world's largest management consulting firm Accenture investigated for engagement and provided ten ways to improve it, but most of these ways related to employees' personal development. For instance, good human capital infrastructure, with an eye to the future management of learning, employee relationship management, keep pace with the times of career development plans and fair and coherent human capital strategies. So, it is clear to see, those performance best in the war for talent are those who dare to practice career management in their enterprises. Because such a broad and in-depth staff development plan is not only strengthen the employer brand, improve the flexibility of enterprise and strain capacity, but also promoted employees' self-development and professional responsibility, at the same time, it also retain the key talents and improve productivity of employees (L. A. Berger & D. R. Berger, 2012).

Studies have found that high engagement of staff is eager to learn more knowledge and apply them to the work to make themselves and the companies success. So, managers should cooperate with staff to create a personal development plan, cleat staff's personal goals and professional goals. In this process, it can keep the communication between employees and managers and make managers know how to work together with employees to achieve their goals. Therefore, career

planning and management have become a very important part of enterprises management system.

At present, in China, most of the empirical researches of career management usually from the perspective of organization and individual respectively. The combination of this study is less, so that someone put this phenomenon called "strange cracks". The empirical research about their effect is very little.

In view of this, this paper from the perspective of career management, comprehensive organizational career management and individual career management, study the effect of this two factors to engagement, and individuals that whether the individual plays an intermediary role between organization and engagement. Try to career management intervention countermeasures to improve engagement. In order to provide reference for organization and individual career management.

1. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

1.1 Organizational Career Management and Engagement

Organizational career management refers to that the organization takes systematic methods and measures to employees' career (Long, Fang, & Ling, 2002). Through these methods, it can improve the employees' working ability and meet their personal fulfillment. Consequently, employees happy to stay in the company and willing to create value for the company for a long time. Chinese scholars Long et al. (2002) through the study on Chinese employees, found that organizational career management in China is mainly reflected in four dimensions: Provide information, the fair promotion, pay attention to training and career cognition. Provide information refers to that the company releases vacancy information in time and it also has a clear position channel information. The fair promotion refers to that the company has a sound system of promotion. Staff promotion is based on employees' ability and performance. Pay attention to training mainly refers to that company will organize various internal and external training in a planned way, or support staff to record of formal schooling education, etc.. Career cognition is refers to that the company through job rotation gives feedback information about employees' work in time, etc.. So employees understand their advantages and disadvantages, which can deepen the cognition for the each position (Long, Fang, & Ling, 2002). In this paper, we use the view of long li-rong and his questionnaire.

Engagement is mainly refers to the level of the emotion and energy about their work. For the research of engagement covers the factors of affecting factors, organizational factors and individual factors. Kahn found that employees the level of concern and support form competent and organization is an important source of their psychological security (Kahn, 1992). When they

feel more rewards and recognition feedback on their work, they will be more dedicated. Research has shown that organizations have a higher degree of fairness, and it is felt by employees, they will pay more attention and emotion at work. The world famous consulting firm Hewitt Associates study also pointed out, when the company gives attention to employee's career and take relevant policy management, it will enhance the ability of company to create value. So we think that organization career management as a kind of organizational factors, it's four dimensions will play a positive role for engagement. Therefore, we put forward the following hypotheses:

H1a: Fair promotion has a positive effect on the engagement;

H1b: Provide information has a positive effect on the engagement;

H1c: Pay attention to training has a positive effect on the engagement;

H1d: Career cognitive has a positive effect on the engagement.

1.2 Organizational Career Management and Individual Career Management

Individual career management refers to the employees through some methods and strategy to actively promote the competitiveness of themselves (Long, Fang, & Ling, 2003). Scholars research on individual career management has a variety of models. For example, Pazy believe that it includes career planning, initiative and help to obtain professional guidance of career strategy three factors (Pazy, 1988). However, Chinese scholars Long et al. (2002) deemed that it can be divided into five factors: professional exploration, establishment of career goals and strategies, continue to learn, pay attention to relationship and show yourself. Because Long et al.'s conclusion on the basis of the reality of our Chinese employees, so in order to fit the objective conditions of China, the paper selects this view and questionnaire.

The research of the relationship between individual career management and engagement is few. But a study said, employees in the exploration of personal career and determining career goals, will be significantly affected by the related policies of organization (Sugalsk & Greenhaus, 1986). Furthermore career building theory thinks that when employees to actively participate in organizational career management activities, they will gradually understand the concept of the organization about career management, clearly know the internal career development path, in the end, master the personal characteristics required by the company's work. By cultivating the personal characteristics, it can improve not only organizational but also individual performance (Van der Sluis & Poell, 2003). So we believe that the measures taken by the organization may have a considerable promoting for employees. Therefore, we put forward the following hypotheses:

H2a: Fair promotion has a positive effect on individual career management;

H2b: Provide information has a positive effect on individual career management;

H2c: Pay attention to training has a positive effect on individual career management;

H2d: Career cognitive has a positive effect on individual career management.

1.3 Individual Career Management and Engagement

Through the research of the relationship between individual career management and engagement found that implement effective individual career management had positive impact on professional attitude, work efficiency (Tharenou, 1997), organizational commitment (Ling & Ou, 2010). It also improved the staff's professional skills (Lee, 2002), made the personal and job matching (Weng, 2010). So, we believe that the individual career

management as personal factor has positive effects on engagement. Therefore, we put forward the following hypotheses:

H3: Individual career management has a positive effect on the engagement.

Organizational career management has positive effect on individual career management, and individual career management has positive effect on the engagement. So, we can think:

H4a: Individual career management mediate between fair promotion and engagement;

H4b: Individual career management mediate between provide information and engagement;

H4c: Individual career management mediate between pay attention to training and engagement;

H4d: Individual career management mediate between career cognitive and engagement.

Based on the above analysis and assumptions, in this paper, built a concept model. It is shown in Figure 1.

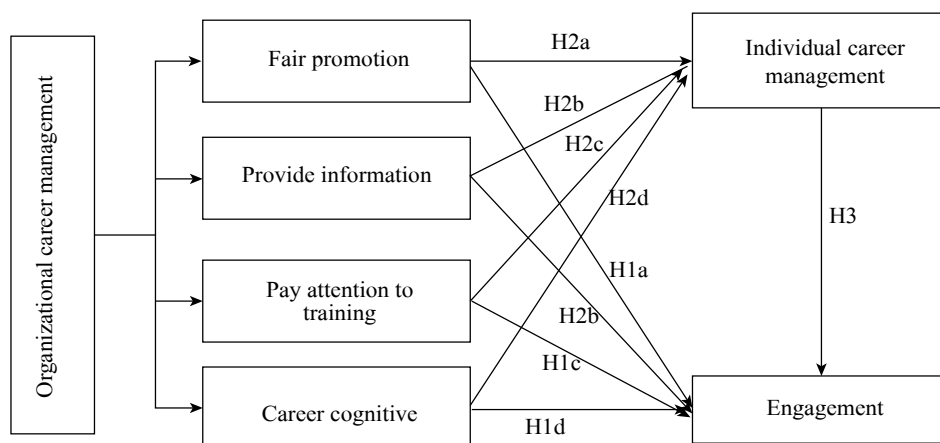


Figure 1
 Concept model

2. METHOD

2.1 Survey Instruments and Model Measures

This paper uses the questionnaire to collect data. Beside the part of the personal basic information, the others part use Liker5 scale. The scale is made up of three parts:

Organizational career management scale is the scale that Long (2002) developed and verified. Through factor analysis to modify the scale. The revised scale has good validity. This scale has four dimensions. The fair promotion includes 4 items, for example, the company will promote according to my performance review. Providing information including 4 items, for example, company has a staff qualifications standards and documents. Paying attention to training includes 4 items, for example, company provides convenient conditions for employees' self-study. Career cognition has 4 items, for example, the company will provide feedback on my

performance to improve my work.

Individual career management scale is the scale that Long liring developed and verified. Through factor analysis to modify the scale. The revised scale has good validity. This scale includes 18 items, for example, made the career planning, pay attention to training and skills relevant to the works, actively looking for the ideal career, etc..

Engagement scale is the UWEs (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) which was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). The scale has been confirmed in multiple countries and it has a good reliability and validity. This scale includes 17 items, for example, I am full of vitality in the work, I think work is full of meaning and purpose, I immersed in my work, etc..

2.2 Participants and Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed to the new-generation employees and the region was restricted in Jiangsu,

Zhejiang, and Shanghai. 315 questionnaire taken back, after careful screening, finally obtain 300 effective questionnaire, effective recovery rate was 95.23%.

In this paper, using SPSS17.0 and SmartPLS2.0 for data analysis. Structural equation model including two phase: Measurement model and structure model. The measurement model is mainly comprehensive evaluate the reliability and validity of research tools. The paper uses SPSS17.0 for inspection of measurement model; structure model is mainly evaluate the significance of the path model, the paper uses the SmartPLS2.0 for inspection of the structure model.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The paper uses Cronbach's Alpha and CR test the reliability. The inspection standards are that Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7 and CR is greater than 0.7 too. All the measuring items of factors loading must be greater than 0.5. AVE must be greater than 0.5 to test validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table1
The Result of Reliability and Validity

Factor	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Fair promotion	0.810	0.876	0.640
Provide information	0.836	0.890	0.671
Pay attention to training	0.845	0.896	0.684
Career cognitive	0.828	0.885	0.659
Individual career management	0.790	0.901	0.624
Engagement	0.973	0.975	0.699

From the above result, all of factors' Cronbach's Alpha and CR are greater than 0.7. It shows that the reliability of the measurement model is good.

All of factors' loading and AVE are greater than 0.5. It shows that the validity of the measurement model is good.

3.2 Evaluation of Structural Model

3.2.1 Hypothesis Test

The paper uses SmartPLS2.0, through 300 sample data of survey, to fit the research model. Then, to test the significance of path coefficient of structural model. Figure 2 shows the path coefficient of model fitting.

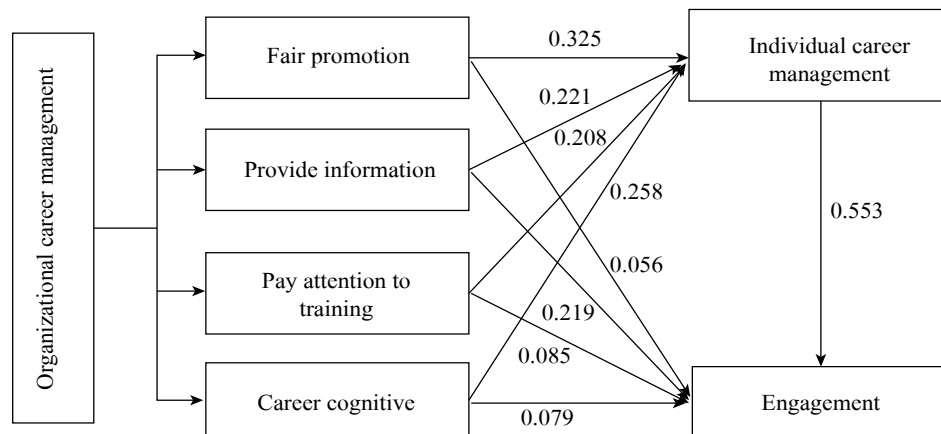


Figure 2
Model Path

Table 2
Result of Hypothesis

Hypothesis and path	Path coefficient	T-value	P-value level	Hypothesis result
H1a	0.056	0.669	>0.05	Nonsupport
H1b	0.219	2.561	<0.01	Support
H1c	0.085	1.479	>0.05	Nonsupport
H1d	0.079	0.922	>0.05	Nonsupport
H2a	0.221	4.214	<0.001	Support
H2b	0.325	3.933	<0.001	Support
H2c	0.208	2.876	<0.001	Support
H2d	0.258	3.959	<0.001	Support
H3	0.553	4.406	<0.001	Support

Using Bootstrapping ($N=1000$) tests the model's path coefficient and its significance. When $p < 0.05$, hypothesis establishes, when $p < 0.01$, indicating that the result is very significant. Hypothesis testing results as shown in Table 3, in addition to H1a, H1c and H1d, the others are established.

3.2.2 Intermediary Function Test

In the model, we set variables to X and dependent variables to Y. So, $X \rightarrow Y$ is the direct effect model. Set the "c" as their path coefficient. If "c" is significant, then introduce a mediation variable M. Set "a" as path coefficient of $X \rightarrow M$, "b" as path coefficient of $M \rightarrow Y$, "c" as path coefficient of $X \rightarrow Y$ in the mediation model. If "a" and "b" are significant, but "c" is non-significant, then the model is a complete mediation model. If "a", "b" and "c"

are all significant, then the model is a partial mediation model. Combining with the step by step method and the Bootstrap method tests intermediary role of this paper (Wen & Ye, 2014).

The detailed steps are as follows:

Firstly, testing “c”, if significant, the mediation effect is established. If non-significant, the shadowing effect is established. No matter “c” significant or not, follow-up inspection should be done.

Secondly, testing “a” and “b”, if significant, go to step 4, if “a” and “b” at least one is not significant, go to step 3.

Thirdly, using Bootstrap method test $H_0: ab = 0$, if significant, the indirect effect significant, go to step 4. Whereas the indirect effect is not significant, stop the test.

Fourthly, testing “c”, if significant, direct effect significant, go to step 5. If non-significant, only has a mediation effect.

Fifthly, testing signs of “ab” and “c”, if the same, partial mediation effect is established. If opposite, the shadowing effect is established.

According to the above steps, in direct role model, the path coefficient of “fair promotion→engagement” is 0.168, $p < 0.01$, significant. The mediation effect is established. The path coefficient of “fair promotion→individual career management” is 0.221, $p < 0.001$, significant. The path coefficient of “individual career management→engagement” is 0.553, $p < 0.001$, significant. The indirect effect significant. In mediation model, the path coefficient of “fair promotion→engagement” is 0.056, $p > 0.05$, non-significant. It only has mediation effect. In other words, individual career management completely mediates fair promotion and engagement.

In direct role model, the path coefficient of “provide information→engagement” is 0.423, $p < 0.001$, significant. The mediation effect is established. The path coefficient of “provide information→individual career management” is 0.325, $p < 0.001$, significant. The path coefficient of “individual career management→engagement” is 0.553, $p < 0.001$, significant. The indirect effect significant. In mediation model, the path coefficient of “provide information→engagement” is 0.219, $p < 0.01$, significant. The direct effect is significant. Because all the path coefficients are positive, so there is a partial mediation effect. In other words, individual career management partial mediates provide information and engagement.

In direct role model, the path coefficient of “pay attention to training→engagement” is 0.187, $p < 0.01$, significant. The mediation effect is established. The path coefficient of “pay attention to training→individual career management” is 0.208, $p < 0.001$, significant. The path coefficient of “individual career management→engagement” is 0.553, $p < 0.001$, significant. The indirect effect significant. In mediation model, the path coefficient of “pay attention to

training→engagement” is 0.085, $p > 0.05$, non-significant. It only has mediation effect. In other words, individual career management completely mediates pay attention to training and engagement.

In direct role model, the path coefficient of “career cognitive→engagement” is 0.215, $p < 0.01$, significant. The mediation effect is established. The path coefficient of “career cognitive→individual career management” is 0.258, $p < 0.001$, significant. The path coefficient of “individual career management→engagement” is 0.553, $p < 0.001$, significant. The indirect effect significant. In mediation model, the path coefficient of “career cognitive→engagement” is 0.079, $p > 0.05$, non-significant. It only has mediation effect. In other words, individual career management completely mediates career cognitive and engagement.

CONCLUSION

The main research conclusions and implications of this paper are as follow:

Firstly, in this paper, we combine organization and individual career management in the same model, and study their effect of engagement. The result showed that: Fair promotion, pay attention to training and career cognition of organizational career management positively affect individual career management, which also positively affect engagement, but they do not have direct significant impact on engagement. Provide information of organizational career management not only affect individual career management positively and directly, but also positively affect engagement with the mediation of individual career management.

Secondly, the results found that organizational career management has obvious positive effect on individual career management, so enterprises should take measures to management the career of employees. The enterprises can provide a more detailed accurate position promotion channel information, and provide more personalized customized training program. In this process, take benign interaction with individual career management strategies, find a balance in the interaction to achieve the improvement of engagement.

Finally, it can be seen from the results that individual career management has strong positive effect on the engagement, and it even completely intermediary fair promotion, pay attention to training, career cognition and engagement. It points that it is important to management self-career. But the current for self-career management did not cause the attention of individual and the whole society. So individual career management should be at the stage of education, let each person to establish suitable career management objectives before entering the workplace. So that they can engage in their interest and like to dedicate their time and energy to work.

REVELATION

Certainly, this paper also has deficiencies. Firstly, this article's sample only select the employees from Jiangsu Province, Shanghai and Zhejiang province. The future research still needs samples from different types of industries, a wider range of area. Secondly, individual personality characteristics may also have effect on the career management, engagement and their relationship, so future research can attempt to combine these factors.

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